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Predicting early developmental patterns among Latino infants and their families in the United States

Commissioned by the National Task Force on Hispanic Early Education, the present study provided an examination of the developmental characteristics of a nationally-representative sample of children from different racial/ethnic groups, with a particular emphasis on advancing the understanding of the complexities of Latino infant development. Results indicate that infant outcomes did not generally relate to ethnicity, maternal education, maternal employment, or household income, as often found in smaller, convenience samples. Rather, the skills and behaviors of Latino and other parents consistently and overwhelmingly relate to infant cognitive and motor development in the first nine months of life. Thus, after controlling for other characteristics, it appears that parents' active engagement in supporting the earliest learning experiences exerts a considerable influence on their children's early development. Given that Latino parents engage in less book reading and storytelling with their infants, the development and delivery of culturally-responsive interventions to target these practices are indicated.